

America's Three Women Aviators

America has three women aviators, all of whom received their training at the Hempstead Plain field near Mineola, N. Y. They are Miss Harriet Quimby, Miss Blanche Scott and Miss Matilda Moisant. Miss Quimby, Miss Scott and Miss Moisant, all of them, Miss Quimby and Miss Moisant, hold diplomas which entitle them to fly at all organized meets, and any record they make will be considered official.

Miss Quimby, the first American woman to get such a diploma, made her qualifying flights the thirty-third time she went out, but Miss Moisant did better and was graduated after her twenty-third lesson. The lessons last on an average from two to five minutes and are usually given about a clock in the morning, when there is no breeze. This means that a candidate for a diploma must be up not much later than 4 A. M. Frequently a heavy fog overhangs the field and flying has to be postponed. If a breeze starts in the meantime the lesson is called off for the day.

In order to win a degree the aviator must be able to turn circles in an aeroplane, perform a series of figure eights,

land within 165 feet of a designated mark and attain an altitude of the same distance. Both Miss Quimby and Miss Moisant easily met these conditions, and the former set up a record for accurate landing with a monoplane. Both maintain that it is nothing to brag about and that any woman with a cool head could do the same.

Although Miss Scott was really the first woman in this country to take up aviation she does not hold a license, as her course of lessons has been somewhat irregular. About a year ago she applied to Glenn H. Curtiss, who was inclined to think that flying was a bad business for women, but after much persuasion he accepted Miss Scott as a pupil. In a short time he decided it was too risky for a woman and induced Miss Scott to give it up.

Later she went to Dayton, Ohio, and was a constant visitor at the Wright school, but the Wrights would not teach a woman to fly. It was even said that they would not sell a woman a machine. Their own sister, Miss Katherine Wright, has taken only one ride, and she shares

the opinion of her brothers that a woman's place is on the ground. They have permitted some of their aviators to take up women as passengers occasionally.

Miss Scott finally returned to New York and applied to Capt. Thomas S. Baldwin and was taken as a pupil. Capt. Baldwin had watched the work of Miss Quimby, who was a pupil of André Houper, instructor in the Moisant school, and was satisfied that he was not running a risk. As Miss Scott had absorbed the theories in the Curtiss school, it was not long before she was flying about Long Island and doing cross-country stunts. On one trip she stayed up about fifteen minutes.

Capt. Baldwin's method of teaching is direct. He does not believe much in grass trimming. He gives a pupil a high powered machine and as soon as the pupil learns the controls he is permitted to make a straightaway. He next learns to make turns, and after that it is all smooth sailing if the engine behaves properly and other troubles known to aviation do not arise.

Miss Scott is the only woman who has taken instructions in one of these high powered fliers. At the other school a machine with only enough motive power to make runs over the ground is used. By this process the pupil learns his controls and then he is allowed to use another machine for getting off the ground.

These three women fliers have made a fine record over their brother aviators in not having had a real smashup. Neither

Miss Moisant nor Miss Scott has had a break of any kind, and Miss Quimby had her only accident while she was making runs along the ground. One of her wheels struck a hut and the damage only amounted to about \$10.

"We certainly are not examples of recklessness," said Miss Quimby, who has witnessed many tumbles made by the men pupils.

And Miss Moisant chimed in to say that she was just a little proud of the fact that she was the last of seven pupils to enter the school and, with the exception of Miss Quimby, the first to graduate.

Prof. Houper, who at first discouraged women, now says he is satisfied that a flying machine is just as safe if not safer in the hands of a woman than of a man. The men fliers generally still doubt woman's ability to rival them in record making. They don't believe women will ever have the necessary courage for an altitude flight or will go in for spectacular work.

Both Miss Quimby and Miss Moisant say they expect to take up cross-country

flying and passenger carrying, because they consider that the most practical. They disapprove of acrobatic stunts. Miss Scott hopes to be able to perform any kind of stunt known to aviation. Before taking up flying she was an automobile driver and about a year ago made a dash from New York to San Francisco. At one time she demonstrated cars for a firm. She comes from Rochester and is the daughter of a horseman.

Miss Quimby was born in California and is of New England ancestry. She is an only child and makes her home with her parents in this city. Miss Quimby was one of the first women to drive an automobile.

Miss Moisant is a sister of the late John B. Moisant, who lost his life in an aeroplane accident at New Orleans last December.

"In two years many women will be flying," Miss Quimby says, "and a woman will be ashamed to say that she is afraid to ride in a flying machine."

Both Miss Quimby and Miss Moisant have adopted the knickerbocker costume, while Miss Scott wears a harem

skirt that divides and gives her freedom while she is in the machine and has the appearance of an ordinary walking skirt on the ground.

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